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HITCHIN RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year

1952

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS:

District Medical Officer of Health (and Divisional Medical Officer for North Herts. Area):

VICTOR R. WALKER, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc., D.P.H.

Divisional Health Office,
12 Brand Street, Hitchin.
(Telephone: Hitchin 1757)

Senior Sanitary Inspector:

WILLIAM M. MATHEWS, Certs. S.I.E.J.B.,
Meat and Foods,
San. Science,
Smoke Inspection.

Additional Inspectors:

ROBERT B. BOLT, Certs. S.I.E.J.B.,
Testamur of Inst. of Public Cleansing.

LEONARD G. STRIBLEY, Certs. S.I.E.J.B.,
(from 1/4/52) Meat and Foods.

Council Offices,
21 Bancroft, Hitchin.
(Telephone: Hitchin 1112-5)

Wm. E. Potter, Clerk to the Council.

To the Chairman and Members of the Hitchin Rural District Council.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On direction of Ministry of Health Circular 2/53 I present an annual report on the health and sanitary conditions of your district for the year 1952.

With some continued loading of the older age groups (shown by the supplied comparability factor of 0.89) the local death rate (11.6), though very close to that for 1951 (11.4), this year exceeds the rate for England and Wales (11.3). Nevertheless a higher local birthrate for 1952 (15.6) exceeds the national figure for the same year (15.3). Local infant mortality rates continue very favourable and the incidence of serious infections was again low.

Your main local health problem continues to be housing, complicated by the problem of disrepair of older properties.

I would again acknowledge having received from your chief officers every consideration and help during the year. In the compilation of the report I would acknowledge the help of your Senior Sanitary Inspector, Mr. W. M. Mathews, who is wholly responsible for the sections touching upon sanitary environment.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
V. R. WALKER
District Medical Officer of Health.

June 1953.

SECTION A

2.

LOCAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres) (boundary changed at 1st April 1953)	81,324
Home Population - Registrar General's estimate	
for mid-1952	22,210
Number of inhabited houses at 1st April 1953 (estd.)	6,676
Rateable Value - 1st April 1953	£105,399
Sum represented by Penny Rate (estimate 1953/4)	£421

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1952

<u>LIVE BIRTHS</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>MALE</u>	<u>FEMALE</u>	<u>RATE FOR DISTRICT</u>	<u>RATE FOR ENGLAND & WALES</u>
LEGITIMATE	327	166	161		
ILLEGITIMATE	20	5	15		
	—	—	—		
ALL	347	171	176		
	—	—	—		
Rate per 1,000 of the est. resident population..				15.6	15.3

STILLBIRTHS

LEGITIMATE	6	3	3		
ILLEGITIMATE	-	-	-		
	—	—	—		
ALL	6	3	3		
	—	—	—		
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births..				17.3	22.6

DEATHS 257 157 100

Rate per 1,000 of the est. resident population.. 11.6 11.3

DEATH RATES OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR

All infants per 1,000 live births	14.4	27.6
Leg. infants per 1,000 leg. births	15.3	
Illeg. infants per 1,000 illeg. births	0.0	

Actual number of infant deaths (a)	<u>under</u> <u>4 weeks</u>	and	(b) <u>under</u> <u>1 year</u>
Legitimate	3		5
Illegitimate	-		-
Total	— 3		— 5

Deaths from Puerperal Causes	....	1
Deaths from Cancer	.....	.... 44
Deaths from Measles	.....	.... -
Deaths from Whooping Cough	....	-
Deaths from other Infective and parasitic diseases	....	-

Comment on Vital Statistics

The estimated local mid-year population for 1952 again shows a rise, this year of 150.

The local birthrate at 15.6 shows a sharp rise on the figure of 14.7 for 1951. Though little changed from 1951, the local death rate for the year (11.6) just exceeds the low national figure (11.3).

The infant mortality rate for 1952 is seen to be exceptionally favourable.

Principal Causes of Death

Of the total of 257 deaths, 102 were attributed to Heart or other Circulatory Diseases, 34 to Vascular Lesions of the Nervous Systems, 22 to Respiratory Diseases, 6 to Tuberculosis (Respiratory) and a reduced number of 2 (both males) to Motor Vehicle Accidents.

SECTION B

General Provision of Health Services

There was no important change during the year.

SECTION C

Staff

Following the submission of a detailed report upon the staff situation, it was decided to recruit the services of a second Additional Sanitary Inspector. Accordingly, Mr. L. G. Stribley was engaged and took up duties from 1st April.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

The water levels in the Council's boreholes throughout the district are not unsatisfactory.

A commencement has been made on the Comprehensive Scheme involving the extension of mains over a considerable part of the Council's area and for the construction of two new water towers at Codicote to replace the existing towers which have become defective. In completing this scheme three more parishes will have the advantage of the Council's supply, i.e., Bygrave, Nownham and Langley.

The purity of water supplies has been maintained both at the pumping stations and at points of delivery throughout the district.

Two tables of analysis are submitted:-

1. Taken by the Council's Engineer & Surveyor to test the quality of the water delivered from the pumping stations into the mains.
2. Taken by the Public Health Department to test the quality of the water delivered to the consumer.

Table 1

Pumping Station	Total	Raw Water		Treated Water	
		Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail
Ashwell	4	4	-	-	-
Codicote	4	4	-	-	-
King's Walden	8	4	-	4	-
Peter's Green	8	4	-	4	-
Wymondley	4	4	-	-	-
Braughing		No record of any samples			
Totals	28	20	-	8	-

Langley Village - 4 all satisfactory.

5.

Table II

1. <u>Council Undertakings</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>taken</u>	<u>Satis-</u> <u>factory</u>	<u>Unsatis-</u> <u>factory</u>	<u>Doubt-</u> <u>ful</u>
Offley-Lilley Scheme	16	10	3	3
Codicote	4	4	-	-
Wymondley	1	1	-	-
2. <u>Private Undertakings</u>				
Knebworth	11	7	4	-
Bygrave	4	2	1	1
Hexton (Estate Co. supply)	14	1	13	-
3. <u>Bulk Supplies</u>				
Hertford R.D. (Shephall)	1	1	-	-
4. <u>Other Sources</u>				
Special samples (private supps.)	41	19	22	-
	92	45	45	4

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Tenders for a scheme for Offley have been received.

As regards the other schemes contemplated by the Council, the following priorities have been agreed -

- (a) Commencement to be made with schemes at Ekleford, Whitwell, and on the flood relief sewer at Knebworth, at the earliest possible date after approval by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.
- (b) Schemes for Barkway and Lilley to be postponed but the consulting Engineers to complete their designs for these works.
- (c) Schemes for Kimpton, Breachwood Green, Little and Great Wymondley, St.Ippollitts and Weston to be left in abeyance.

Refuse Collection

The year has provided some difficulties, especially in relation to staff and vehicle strength, and a special report to the Council was made in December to outline the position.

The coming into use of the Gosmore Depot helped to unify the control of resources and it is hoped, in time, that economies will result therefrom.

Disposal of collected refuse continues to be by tipping, at the eight tips in current use. During the year negotiations for a further tip at Chapel Foot, St. Ippollitts, were satisfactorily concluded.

Figures relating to the work performed appear hereunder:-

<u>No. of Loads</u>	<u>Approx. weight of all materials collected.</u>	<u>Vehicle (inc. Fore-) Mileage (man's van.)</u>
1822	3330 tons	47,314

Cesspool and Night-soil Emptying

The second cesspool emptying vehicle was delivered in May and proved invaluable in reducing the time lag in providing cesspool service during the peak period of demand. Whereas a waiting period of 6/7 weeks had occurred in other years whilst working with one vehicle, the waiting time never exceeded two weeks at any time and many complimentary remarks were received upon the service rendered. Although the second vehicle was not in full demand throughout the year, it forms a valuable reserve of capacity to a continually expanding service. Additionally, when the vehicle is stood down the manpower is of great help in supporting the minimum number of men employed on refuse collection.

I give below details of work carried out since 1948 - the first complete year following the commencement of this service

	<u>Houses in Private</u>		<u>Council Houses</u>		<u>Loads from Sewage Works</u>	<u>Pails emptied</u>
	<u>Free</u>	<u>Ownership Chargeable</u>	<u>Free</u>	<u>Chargeable</u>		
1948	287	78	27	82	339	476 ($\frac{1}{2}$ yr.)
1949	308	126	32	206	329	2641
				(inc. 148 Hinx.)		
1950	395	201	25	59	409	3765
1951	411)	200)	26	47	425	4221
	* 22)	* 3)				
1952						
(Old veh.)	315	169	10	31	466	2947
(New veh.)	156	86	18	30	262	1347

* Hired vehicle.

Salvage

Although the value of materials sold during the year is considerable, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the salvage market is a disappointment. The violent fluctuation of demand results in long periods of stagnation when materials have to be stored and no sales can be obtained. The much boasted "proportionate reduction scheme" which was to be applied to Councils enjoying a permanent outlet in order to help those without such facility, has not been of any help to this Council.

1948	-	64	tons	collected	and	sold	-	income	£269.	7.	0d.
1949	-	53 ³ / ₄	"	"	"	"	-	"	£180.	2.	6d.
1950	-	39	"	"	"	"	-	"	£131.	6.	2d.
1951	-	56	"	"	"	"	-	"	£837.	11.	9d.
1952	-	35	"	"	"	"	-	"	£346.	13.	1d.

Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949

During the year important experimental work was done using the new rodenticide known as "Warfarin". Results have been encouraging and further tests are in progress to ascertain the degree of reliance which can be placed upon the results achieved.

The following table summarises the total work done:-

HITCHIN & WELWYN RURAL AND ROYSTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCILS JOINT PESTS CONTROL SCHEME

SUMMARY

JANUARY 1st to DECEMBER 31st 1952

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED						NO. OF PETS AND/OR MICE PICKED UP
	SEWERS	TIPS ETC.	PRIVATE DWELLINGS	BUS. PREMIS.	BLOCK INSP.	INSP. OF AGR. LAND	
HITCHIN R.D.C.	108½	451½	552½	72½	35½	41½	1241½
WELWYN R.D.C.	16½	103	147½	26	-	13½	306½
ROYSTON U.D.C.	39½	110½	98½	11½	11½	6	276½
	164½	644½	797½	109½	47½	61	1824½
Other figures -							
Total mileage covered by vehicle							402½
Petrol used							
Apprx. miles per gall. -							2227½
Total time spent on mixing bait, veh. maintenance etc.							
Total hours worked							

Total mileage covered by vehicle - 1136
 Petrol used - 60
 Apprx. miles per gall. - 18.9

Hired Van

Sanitary Inspection of the Area

Examination of the figures relating to the visits made by the Inspectors again shows the amount of work handled without the necessity of serving Statutory Notices. No prosecutions were instituted during the year.

The number of visits and inspections for all purposes was 3128, detailed as follows in comparison with the year 1951:-

<u>General Sanitation etc.</u>				<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>
Water Supply	.....	.....	.....	93	196
Drainage	.....	.....	.....	401	539
Cowsheds, Stables and Piggeries	.....	.....	.....	30	42
Tents, Vans and Sheds (including Caravans)	.....	.....	.....	157	209
Factories, Workplaces and Outworkers	.....	.....	.....	17	53
Bakchouses	.....	.....	.....	1	5
Licensed Premises	.....	.....	.....	16	43
Refuse Collection & Disposal and Salvage	.....	.....	.....	455	362
Rodent Control	.....	.....	.....	56	100
Atmospheric Pollution	.....	.....	.....	3	3
Schools ..	.....	.....	.....	2	2
Shops .....	.....	.....	.....	10	42
Petroleum Regulations	.....	.....	.....	29	87
Miscellaneous visits	.....	.....	.....	85	98
<u>Housing</u>					
Public Health Act - visits paid	.....	.....	.....	777	937
Housing Acts - " "	.....	.....	.....	45	94
Overcrowding - " "	.....	.....	.....	1	2
Filthy or verminous premises - visits paid	...	.....	.....	10	25
Miscellaneous visits	.....	.....	.....	4	16
<u>Infectious Diseases</u>					
Enquiries in cases of I.D. .	.....	.....	.....	17	17
Visits re disinfection	.....	.....	.....	11	18
Miscellaneous I.D. visits ..	.....	.....	.....	45	60
<u>Meat and Food Inspection</u>					
Slaughterhouses etc.	.....	.....	.....	14	33
Butchers ..	.....	.....	.....	22	20
Canteens ..	.....	.....	.....	8	7
Dairies and Milk Distributors	.....	.....	.....	5	12
Fishmongers and Poulterers .	.....	.....	.....	1	4
Food Preparing Premises	.....	.....	.....	7	16
Grocers ...	.....	.....	.....	34	32
Greengrocers	.....	.....	.....	-	3
Ice-cream Premises .	.....	.....	.....	3	17
Restaurants	.....	.....	.....	10	16
Milk (sampling)	.....	.....	.....	-	4
Miscellaneous food visits ..	.....	.....	.....	4	14
				<u>2373</u>	<u>3128</u>

Civil Defence

Due to the pressure of other work, this branch of activity (which includes Welfare, Emergency Feeding and Emergency Mortuary Service) has not received the attention needed to bring it to a proper state of fruition. Nevertheless, a lot of ground-work has been done which would be most helpful in the event of the declaration of a state of emergency when ordinary work could be put aside.

SECTION DHousing

At December 31st 1952 the number of applications on the Council's waiting list for housing accommodation was 1181 - an increase of one over the previous year. During 1952, 250 new applications were registered and 249 were deleted from the lists, the applicants in most cases having been re-housed.

Where possible the Council continues to pursue the policy of transferring families from one type of house to another of more suitable size - where bungalows have been built, people living alone or elderly couples have been re-housed in them, thus in many cases making available three-bedroom houses for larger families and so making the best use of all available accommodation.

The figures for the year ended December 31st 1952 are as follows:-

No. of new permanent dwellings completed by the Council	109
No. of new permanent dwellings completed by private enterprise...	37
Total	<u>146</u>

One aspect of this work which has produced gratifying results is the number of occasions upon which it has been possible to obtain undertakings not to re-let properties of a sub-standard character, once the tenants have been re-accommodated. Thanks to an excellent understanding with the Housing Enquiry Officer, Mr. A.E. Stanley, these undertakings have often been obtained before the properties were vacated, and appreciation is due to the Enquiry Officer for his unfailing and generous help in the Housing field.

Caravans

The number of applications for caravan licences continued to mount during the year, and much work results from the necessity of keeping abreast of the demands. However, including those vans upon the one licensed site, the total did not reach 100 at any time during the year. One further regular site (to be licensed in due course) is in course of preparation.

SECTION EInspection and Supervision of Food

A start has been made upon the inspection of all the food and drink premises in the district. As the work can only be done as other duties permit, the speed of progress is slow, but nevertheless in places the work begins to show its mark.

(a) Milk

The results of samples taken in the area appear in the following table:-

Sampling Authority	Designated and School Milks		Non-Designated milks		Tubercule Bacilli		
	<u>Passed</u>	<u>Failed</u>	<u>Passed</u>	<u>Failed</u>	<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Neg.</u>	<u>No. Result</u>
Herts. County Council	30	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Authorities	11	5	4	-	-	-	-
Hitchin Rural Dist. Council	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
	42	6	4	-	-	-	-

Total number of samples - 52

(b) Inspection of meat and other foods

This routine work continues. The amount of foodstuffs condemned as unsound and unfit during the year was as follows:-

	<u>Cwts.</u>	<u>Qtrs.</u>	<u>Lbs.</u>	<u>Ozs.</u>
Dried Fruit	-	2	-	-
Tinned Food	5	3	8	9
Bacon	-	-	3	8
Pig Carcase	-	5	13	-
Beef	10	1	1	-
Mutton	-	-	6	-
Total	17	2	4	1

(c) Food Poisoning Outbreaks

No outbreak of food poisoning was reported during the year.

(d) Factories Acts 1937 and 1948

An abstract from the Report submitted to the Ministry of Labour and National Service on Form 572 is given herewith -

1. Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors)

Premises	No. on Reg-ister	Number of -		
		Inspection	Written Notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Secs. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by the Local Auth.	20	-	-	-
(ii) Factories not inc. in (i) in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Auth.	94	52	7	-
(iii) Other premis. in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Auth. (excl. Outworkers)	-	-	-	-
Total	114	52	7	-

2. Cases in which defects were found

Particulars	No. of cases in which defects found				No. of prosecutions
	Found	Remedied	To H.M. Inspec.	By H.M. Inspec.	
Want of cleanliness	4	1	-	-	-
Overcrowding	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temp.	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation	1	1	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors	-	-	-	-	-
Sanitary Conveniences					
(a) Insufficient	2	2	-	2	-
(b) Unsuitable or defective	1	1	-	-	-
(c) Not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act	2	-	-	-	-
Total	10	5	-	2	-

Outworkers. There are 18 outworkers reported in the district.

SECTION F

Prevalence of and Control over, Infectious and other Diseases

During the year local notifications of acute infectious disease (after corrections) were: Measles 220, Whooping cough 20, Scarlet fever 17, Acute pneumonia 9, Acute poliomyelitis 5, Infectious hepatitis 5, Dysentery 1, and Erysipelas 1.

Measles was moderately ^{heavy} light in incidence during the first and second quarters.

Scarlet fever was somewhat higher in incidence, through a localised group of 12 cases in the Barley-Barkway area in the 4th quarter. Such group contained a considerable proportion of adults whose illness consisted of a severe septic throat with transitory (if any) rash followed in some cases by nephritic or joint symptoms.

The only serious infectious disease was acute poliomyelitis. Of the four paralytic cases three were infants under three years, and one an adult male. The only grouping of cases was in Codicote village at the end of July, with which a further infant notified

in Yorkshire (on holiday) was connected by recent residence. Of the total cases in the district three suffered considerable permanent residual paralysis.

Diphtheria was absent from the district during the year. Despite local continued rarity of the disease, the offer of infant protection by immunisation continues to be accepted by a high proportion of parents.

TUBERCULOSIS

New Cases and Deaths during the year 1952

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 - 1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1 - 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 - 15	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 - 25	4(1)	2	-	1(1)	-	-	-	-
25 - 35	5(4)	3(1)	-	1	1	-	-	-
35 - 45	2(2)	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
45 - 55	1	2	-	-	1	-	-	-
55 - 65	2(1)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
and over	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-
Totals	15(8)	10(1)	-	2(1)	4	-	-	-
Deaths allocated by the Registrar- General after final transfers					5	1	-	-

Comment

At first sight notification totals appear to have risen but scrutiny shows such apparent rise due to an increased proportion of cases transferring residence into the area (shown

15.

separately in brackets). Subtraction of such transfers shows there has been little change in the total numbers of local notifications.

Deaths have increased over the exceptionally low figure of 1951. Of the four deaths recorded as occurring locally, three are seen to have occurred in elderly age groups, showing the changing age incidence of pulmonary tuberculosis.

VICTOR R. WALKER
District Medical Officer
of Health.

June 1953.